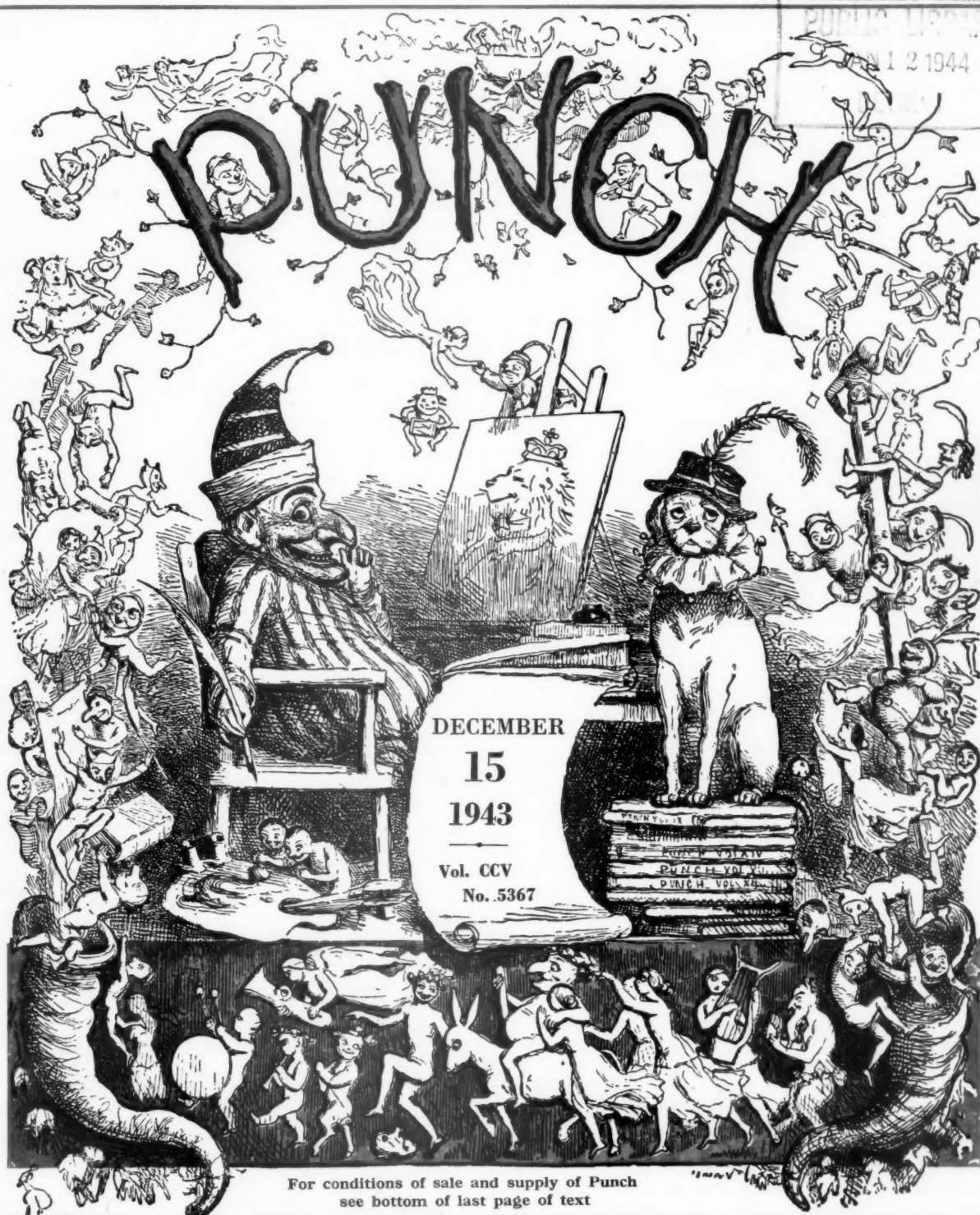


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34/136



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch  
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P604A



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- Personal points pages in new Ration Books are for confectionery and may be detached.
- This is the 1st week of Ration Period No. 6.

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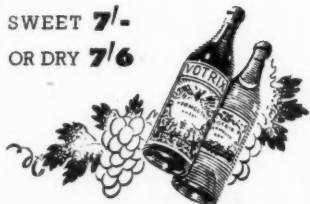
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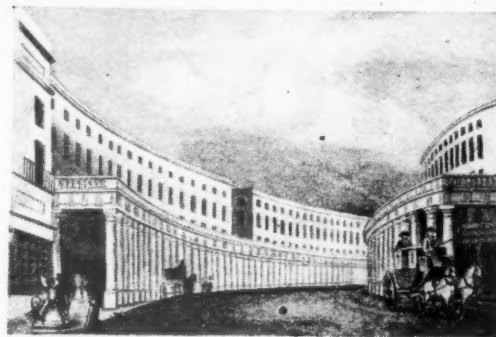
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It was easy to hide apologies in a box of chocolates, to drive away care by a drive out in the car, to celebrate a great occasion in a great vintage. But, to-day, we are circumscribed by the coupon and the queue, and absence encourages abstinence . . . Yet, there is still Balkan Sobranie, blended by the original master hand, ready to give you peace in the midst of war, and perfect pleasure after duty is done. In spite of the war, in smoking the fittest still survive.



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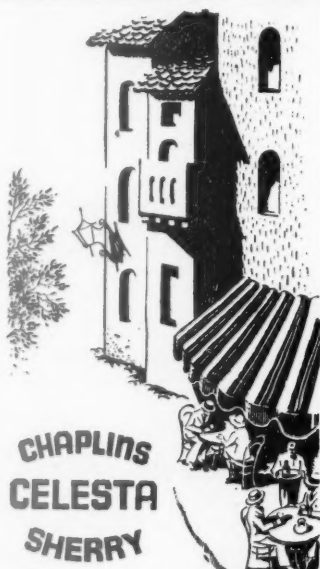
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Thin or Thick  
gives  
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New Controlled Prices :  
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MELLOW  
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MURRAY, SONS AND  
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MEN who smoke Murray's Mellow Mixture won't give it up for love or money! It has a flavour all its own. Try an ounce of Murray's and see what you've been missing! 2/8d. an ounce.

**MURRAY'S  
MELLOW  
MIXTURE**

MURRAY, SONS AND  
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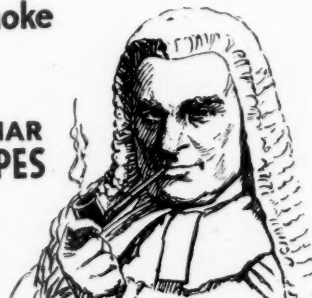
All shrewd Judges smoke

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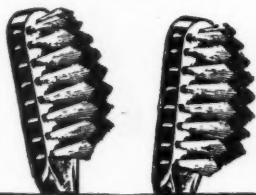
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Today you look for Quality, and still the answer is 'Celanese'. It is a little more difficult to find as Government restrictions and problems of raw materials, transport, and labour make it impossible to maintain a normal supply.

'Celanese' Products are also the answer to many wartime needs of the Forces; and when Peace comes you will find wonderful new products will emerge from these urgent demands of war—a gay peacetime harvest of grim war-time effort.



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No superlative could convey the truly delightful quality of VAMOUR. Skilful blending of the choice imported wines and Selected Herbs of which it is composed make VAMOUR the vermouth for the discriminating. Regrettably short supply at present, but contact your Wine Merchant—you may be fortunate. Remember, every occasion with VAMOUR is a special one.

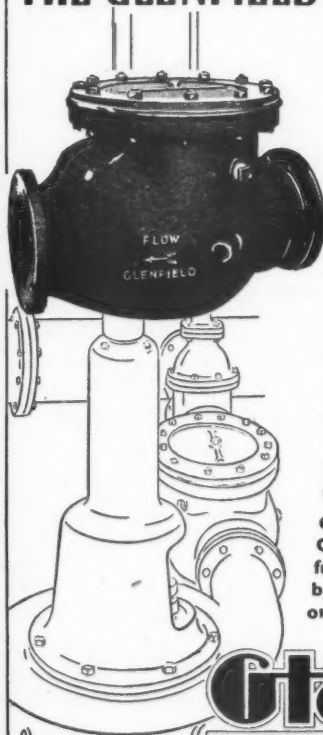
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THE True VERMOUTH

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**VERMOUTIERS (London) LTD.**  
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G215

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FOR DIFFICULT  
REFLUX CONDITIONS



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Actual service in conditions of abnormal severity has fully proved that Glenfield Recoil Valves are silent in action. They neither mask nor conceal, but actually prevent, both slamming and water hammer.

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GLENFIELD AND KENNEDY LIMITED KILMARNOCK

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ROYAL

**"EDISWAN"**

*"The Light of To-day"*

Advertisement of  
THE EDISON SWAN ELECTRIC CO. LTD.  
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# Wax

## AT WAR...

Wax is the basis of all good Shoe Creams and Polishes. But wax is also used in the making of war materials. Meltonian Shoe Cream, noted for its polishing power and leather-preserving qualities, always has been and still is made from a blend of the best waxes, tested for over a century.

The makers of Meltonian Shoe Cream will not use uncontrolled substitute materials, incapable of maintaining the high standard of quality and efficiency for which this cream is famous. That is why sometimes you may find difficulty in getting Meltonian Shoe Cream. But stocks are fairly distributed and your retailer will have his quota, so go on asking for MELTONIAN . . . you may be lucky!





SINCE the 'sixties Romary of Tunbridge Wells have produced 'home-baked' biscuits of supreme quality. They still do so, and any Romary Biscuits which you may be fortunate enough to find will always be in the authentic Tunbridge Wells tradition.

## ROMARY

'TUNBRIDGE WELLS' BISCUITS



"Will my  
Xmas be  
Merry?"

That depends on you. Hundreds of little children and lonely old folk depend on **THE SALVATION ARMY** to bring Christmas happiness to them. You can be a partner in the pleasure of making their Christmas a happy one. We need not disappoint them if you will help us.

**PLEASE SEND A GIFT TO-DAY TO THE CHRISTMAS FUND**

Of course, your Christmas gift can be used for The Salvation Army's widespread work among Service men and women if you prefer. Just mark it accordingly.  
GENERAL CARPENTER,  
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Extra Smartness  
the shoes of  
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**NUGGET**  
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CAPTAIN,  
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SCOTTISH  
BORDERERS

IN BLACK, & DARK BROWN.

USE SPARINGLY - THE SUPPLY IS RESTRICTED

N/JX



# PUNCH

or

The London Charivari



Vol. CCV No. 5367

December 15 1943

## Charivaria

As a follow-up to his statement that 1943 was in no way comparable to 1918, Goebbels is now feverishly plugging the story that 1944 will in no way resemble 1943.

Dr. Goebbels has stated that it is Germany's duty to defend the Vatican. Nothing quite like this has happened since Hitler declared peace on Czecho-Slovakia.



A journalist suggests that the equivalent of film audiences in prehistoric times was when primitive peoples gathered to watch the tribal artist carving pictures on the wall of a cave. He assured them, of course, that the really stupendous soul-searing epics would be coming next week.

A ticket-collector tells us that when checking the passengers in a railway compartment recently he discovered a soldier lying under each seat. We sincerely hope he made the selfish fellows move over to make more room.

A soldier recently returned home after three years' service abroad, and one of the first things he did was to greet an income-tax rebate he had not previously seen.

### The Secret Out

"Mobilising is a word used a great deal in the Fire Service, for it holds the key to successful fire-fighting."  
Staffs paper.

A man who has been out of the country for three years asked for a penny ticket on a London bus. It is believed he was on his way to a wine and spirit merchant's to buy a 12s. 6d. bottle of whisky for Christmas.



B B

In Germany, says a newspaper, farmers get four times as much food as townspeople. So they are four times as mad about its quality.

### With But a Single Thought

"A de Gaullist spokesman was unanimous that Giraud would remain Commander, and asserted that the conditions had been accepted."—Glasgow paper.

A centenarian says he owes his longevity to eating meat. He has certainly passed his allotted spam.

Mr. Donald Gordon, in charge of Canadian rationing, recently gave an official ruling in regard to the composition of haggis. As far as this country is concerned, of course, it is still on the secret list.



An important boxing match has been twice postponed. Both sides, however, deny that they have put out any peace feelers.

"Some of the German troops behind the lines in North Italy are of very poor quality, hardly fit for any form of service," says a neutral journalist. Couldn't they be used to march past Mussolini or something?

In regard to the toy situation, we understand that a few new ones are still available in the shops for parents who haven't been able to afford second-hand ones.

"I saw a high-ranking staff officer driving a little 7 h.p. car towards Whitehall," says a correspondent. We understand that this type of vehicle has been found quite adequate to leave important documents in.



## A New Nostalgia

... Even as when the much enduring man  
Of many wiles, after the Ten Years' War,  
Came home at last outworn with voyaging  
Amongst the Islands and the perilous seas,  
Yet sometimes wearied of his home and hall  
In wave-girt Ithaca—

So I surmise

That those Great Statesmen who conduct the world  
With perfect unanimity of view  
Grow restless on returning; long once more  
To see the globe lie dwarf-like at their feet,  
Accompanied by secretariats,  
Ambassadors and experts, large and small,  
Their dear companions, named or else not named  
(In legends underneath the photographs  
That read from left to right along the page)  
For they remember the Assyrian dawn,  
The Oxus and the road to Samarcand,  
The dwindling Nile; in dreams they drop again  
To some great palace freshly commandeered  
With domes and minarets that touch the stars,  
They hang their coats and hats upon the pegs,  
They dine in decorative uniforms,  
They toast each other through interpreters,  
They scheme the final Victory.

But then,

Returning, though with homesick eyes they see  
Their own dear native land, too soon  
The dissidence of every day, the broils—  
So different from the lone Arabian night,  
The vast hotel, the usual offices,  
The mystic secrecy of plots untold—  
They find their Congress or their Parliament  
Fractions and brawling, and content to weave  
With irritating motions hour by hour  
The web of mere domestic policies. . . .

EVOE.

## Germany, Japan Stage Counter-blow

Moguls Meet in Andamans

I AM now able to reveal that Hitler and Hirohito have just concluded a secret meeting in the Andaman Islands.

It has long been clear to me that some counterblast must be expected from the Axis to the series of Allied Conferences; and Teheran put, as we say, the cap on it. It was urgently necessary that Hitler should meet somebody, somewhere, without delay. The old happy Brenner days were over. None of the Balkan boys seemed to be of quite the necessary calibre. There was nothing for it but an urgent radio call to Hirohito.

Difficulties immediately arose, I am in a position (and determined) to say, over the venue. Von Papen, always at his best in an affair of this sort, suggested that as Japan was not at war with Russia the Soviet would perhaps permit the Emperor to visit some quiet sector of the Eastern front, whence he could shout (in code) to Hitler

across No Man's Land. Hitler, himself, according to my informant, vetoed the idea on the grounds that he was not accustomed to being shouted at, either in code or clear; he wished also to point out that at the moment quiet sectors on the Eastern front were in short supply. Von Papen thereupon, it will be remembered, returned to Ankara, via Belgrade, Lisbon and Triana.

Hirohito's standpoint in these negotiations was at first simple. He was not, he said, owing to his somewhat divine status, permitted to leave the soil of Japan, and would therefore expect Hitler at his palace about tea-time on the following Thursday. To this Hitler sent a regrettable answer, and it appeared for some days that the plans for a meeting would break down. But happily the Emperor's theological advisers found a way out of the difficulty. These Kumbai, as they are called, who form the College of Keepers of the Emperor's Soul and do their work conscientiously at a fee of twenty sen a spiritual crisis and two yen a full-scale divine upheaval, consulted their Sacred Books and discovered that provided the Emperor's spirit remained in the country it was in order for him to project his body to pretty well any part of Greater East Asia. Hirohito's spirit was accordingly laid up, with gorgeous ceremony, in a small ivory casket, and his body projected by air to the Andaman Islands.

The full story of Hitler's journey by submarine may one day be told. For the present it must be enough to say that when he finally blew his tanks and rose to the surface off the penal settlement the scene was as impressive as any the little island had ever witnessed. As the U-boat slowly forged ahead towards the quay the Guard of Honour sprang smartly to attention, massed bands swung into a medley of old Shinto folk-tunes, and the Emperor's hand rose to the peak of his so-called hat. Simultaneously from a circular flag-staff, so designed that the flag of neither country should be uppermost, broke out the Rising Sun and the Swastika. Next moment Hitler, tanned and bearded, stepped confidently ashore; the two men clasped hands then, turning, passed swiftly down the ranks of motionless men. In that simple symbolical moment the falsehood of Kipling's specious adage was once and for all revealed. The twain had met.

What a fascinating contrast the characters, aptitudes, the very mode of life of these two men make. Hirohito wears spectacles, Hitler, not. Hirohito rides a white horse, which he calls Delicate Blossom from the Valley of a Thousand Petals, Hitler not. Hirohito is passionately interested in marine zoology, if that is the proper term for the study of primitive forms of life in rock-pools, Hitler could not be less interested in rock-pools if he tried for a year on end. Hirohito is divine, but not exclusively so; he admits, that is, the existence of divinities (ancestors and so on) of longer standing than himself. Hitler would hardly be so broad-minded as that. One imagines, therefore, a certain constraint between the two as they passed into the prison compound, where the first conference was to be held. The language difficulty alone (Hitler speaks Japanese with a strong Austrian accent) would be enough to put a definite bound to conversation, quite apart from the Fuehrer's ignorance of zoophytes. However, quite soon they began to talk about war and then both of them were happy.

At the conference itself Hitler, according to my informant (von Papen), spoke for three hours on the subject of Germany's wrongs, after which he gave a masterly summary of the development of German strategy, showing how the



### DOWN BUT NOT OUT

"When I use a word it means just what I choose it to mean, neither more nor less. . . . When I say Reconstruction I mean that everything's going to be better for everybody everywhere, and nothing wrong's ever going to happen to anybody any more."—*Humpty Dumpty reconstituted.*





## Slagworth Old Prize Band

**D**URING the upward trend of the brass-band movement Slagworth Old Prize also sought fame, but in the riddling process the band failed to squeeze through the mesh. There was a period of promise, but it passed. Had it been a question of uniforms Slagworth Old might well have emerged champions, for the players were arrayed gorgeously, as large tinted photographs in the Cloggers' Arms taproom and the Chapel Institute show to this day. Job Pollard and other elderly people describe the predominant hue as geranium red, which is well for authenticity's sake, since, either owing to inferior tinting material or the fact that the two photographs are hung in different lights, the uniforms in the Institute are an anemic pink and those in the Cloggers' Arms liver-coloured.

The uniform was given by old Mr. Hollaron. Those were the roaring days of cotton and its ancillary trades, when mill walls were shivering like dynamos and the Irwell had turned fetid and rainbow-coloured. Old Mr. Hollaron was a rare patron, and beside presenting the uniform he built a club for the band. At first he wanted to name the band after his works, but was dissuaded upon it being pointed out to him that the title, Hollaron's Sauce and Pickle Factory Band, might jar at Southern festivals. Why the heights were never struck he failed to understand. He lured a class conductor from a rival organism, and there was other talent: Billy Bates on the cornet could toss cadenzas over his shoulder like caramel wrappers, and Jack Scowercroft's trombone-playing put him among the demi-gods after Slagworth declined and he moved elsewhere. Still, the band did not make the grade, although it did have its good times. It played at gymkhanas, flower-shows and on various seaside piers, but it never made a world tour or performed before royalty as certain other bands did.

The club old Mr. Hollaron built is still merged among Slagworth sub-architecture. When the band fell away the place degenerated into a drinking and betting den. The stone lyre over the entrance became coated with soot, and the muse twanging it looked down plaintively at an inflow and exit of tippling gamblers. There was a tape machine, and it was possible to back horses up to the start of each race; the woodwork went unpolished, the walls flaked, and beer

and spirits slopped all over the place—until the police made a raid and the Bench removed the licence. A long time afterwards a very modern band rented the building for a period. Saxophones groaned, hot trumpeters tore off violent passages, drummers discovered full expression among an odd range of instruments, including the backs of chairs and the electric-light shades, while crooners sobbed interminably over loves that were lost, stolen or strayed. The muse now looked as though she would have welcomed back the sots.

For years after climbing to its initial tee Slagworth Old functioned intermittently. On local occasions it would turn out in a heterogeneity of uniforms ranging from such garb as a green tunic with grey flannel trousers to the light blue ensemble of the drum-major, whose appearance was marred by a huge pair of white gauntlet gloves which shed blanco each time he swung his staff and caused his uniform gradually to resemble a cloud-puffed summer sky. Then the band would hibernate again. But it never actually became defunct, largely owing to the unwearying patience of one man. Job Pollard, who, as a youth, was on the fringe at the band's inception, has always been lit by the same torch that fired old Mr. Hollaron. Probably Job's is the greater essay, for he is comparatively unmoneyed. None the less he sticks, and he has stuck throughout the piece. The great brass bands of to-day were raised on the backs of

working men like him. Nothing deterred him, and through the years he kept the band together with the one unswerving idea of bringing it to where he had always thought it should have been. At last he contrived to integrate an organism which ultimately brought back a junior trophy from Belle Vue. Success now appeared to trickle, but unfortunately Hitler started his antics. The war came. To-day virtually the whole of the triumphant players are in the Forces.

Only a nucleus remains, but Job Pollard still nurses it. Bullyingly, chaffingly, he corners it for practice once a week. On the way home not so very long ago he dropped into the warden's post and a fellow warden, tentatively upheaving the bombardon Job carried, was so caught by the itch that he is now a playing member. Indisputably a nucleus remains. Come to Slagworth and you will hear it this Christmas. There is Job on the tenor horn, Sector Warden Pilling with the bombardon, old Fox at the baritone, Tom Isherwood on the first cornet, and a couple of sixteen-year-olds, Arnold Simms at the trombone and Willie Clarke playing second cornet. And although you may be crashed from slumber by the strains of "Hark, Hark, What News!" you will surely stay awake to listen to the carol? Indeed, you may even rise and peer through the window at comparative loveliness, for the brickwork and slates of Slagworth are seen at their best by starlight. And for a little while the war will cease being at the back of your mind, and you will merge into the aura of the old, old festival. Across the road rears the silhouette of a leaning chimney-clump from which, later in the morning, smoke will arise from fires cooking Christmas fare. You will recall the women you saw enter church the previous afternoon, carrying straw to arrange the crib. Just yourself at the window. A crispness in the air. The beating stars. A blue glint on roof-top rime. And harmony from the dim group below. . . .

At the same time you should be warned. You may hear some disharmony—this in the non-playing intervals from the junior members of the nucleus. Arnold Simms belongs to the Army Cadets and Willie Clarke to the A.T.C., and when two such members come together contention invariably arises as to which belongs to the doughtier organization, and there is always a private war.



"I wonder how many of you spotted the mistake in yesterday's recipe?"

## English Islands or Lost Off Labrador

XI

Monday, 23rd August

THIS is the eighth day of incarceration, the seventh day of fog. Last night we really did think we should be away this morning. All the afternoon it did not rain; the wind veered almost to south and we could see Blyth Island (and a vast iceberg) through the entrance. At dusk it began to blow hard, and we expected to wake to find a hard sou'wester this morning, and the fog all gone. But the wind has backed, it is raining again, and the fog is still here.

The ship was supplied for three weeks only, and the three weeks will be up on Wednesday. There will always be a sea-gull, I suppose, so long as the Padre's ammunition holds out. Fuel is going to be a big trouble. We burn nothing but wood in the galley. There is not a trace of timber on the island or anywhere else. In some places, the Padre says, they have to burn everything that grows, including the dwarf trees and small plants such as I was collecting yesterday for the rock-garden. Those who live out the winter in these islands have to go up the mainland bays and cut firewood during the summer. It is raining hard and colder than ever. I have no winter underclothing with me. Herb thinks that nothing will clear the weather but a snowstorm.

Last night I amused myself by plotting our courses back to St. Anthony, the ship's base in Newfoundland, supposing we were driven by salt-cod or desperation to break out and use the compass in the open sea. We shall never make any place on this shore, among the rocks and reefs, while the fog lasts. But I doubt our lasting a hundred and twenty miles at sea while this wind lasts. And there are always the icebergs.

This plaguy magnetic variation, according to the charts, keeps changing, and the sums are different every sixty miles. In latitude 56° North it was 38° 30' W. in 1937, and with an annual decrease of six minutes is now about 38°. In 55° N. sixty miles south, it is 37°; in 54° N. it is 35° 45'. Off the north of Newfoundland (where we once hoped to go) it was 34° 30' in 1919 and was then increasing one minute annually, which makes about 35°. It is like travelling through Canada by train and trying to keep up with the liquor laws of the various provinces.

The news is good. Kharkov has fallen, and all the big noises seem to

be at that great barrack of a hotel in Quebec. Mr. Churchill, I suppose, will soon be flying over us again—unless he decides to swim this time (I wouldn't put it past him). I do hope he has time to stop at Goose Bay, for this is the Eighth Wonder of the World.

The biggest airport in Newfoundland is at a place called Gander. By a queer chance the wonderful natural site in Labrador which has now become the greatest airport in the world is by the shores of Goose Bay: and Goose and Gander together ride the air of the North Atlantic. To reach it by water you steam two hundred miles along the coast of Labrador and then ninety miles inland—very breath-taking and beautiful, these ninety miles—to the head of Lake Melville, a huge fiord sixty miles long, and ten to twenty in width, with depths of a hundred and seventeen fathoms half-way up and sixty near the top.

Three hundred miles further inland, by the way, are the Grand Falls, which are said to be much higher than Niagara and would provide power for half Canada. But you would have to conquer the black-fly first, I fancy.

At the top of the Lake is Goose Bay, a pocket lake four miles by two. At the top of that, when you are beginning to think that you are alone with virgin Nature at last—and very warm and lovely she is there after the shrewish coast—you come upon a large jetty with ocean steamers unloading. One hundred feet or so above that is a vast plateau, designed by God, and discovered by a man called Guy, to be an airfield. It is stupendous. The runways are as smooth as a billiard-table and the central way is, I think, a mile long. Two years ago there was nothing here but the small pine and spruce, the sand, the white reindeer moss, *sphagnum* (I think), the rocks and the pink flowers.

Now there are two citadels—I will not call them camps, they are not yet cities—the American Air Force on one side; the Royal Canadian Air Force on the other. All, of course, is of wood, and in the Aldershot school of architecture. But these buildings of tasteful green have an air of style and grandeur never achieved by (or for) the British soldiery. All is done lavishly. The new officers' mess, not yet ready, with a superb view across the lake to the blue Mealy Mountains, has the proportions (and the floor) of a ball-room, and would house the Brigade of

Guards. The model laundry is larger than the House of Commons, and could deal, I should say, with all the washing in Newfoundland. Water is pumped up from the Hamilton River. Hot water circulates through overhead pipes. Electric light blazes in the wilderness. Millions of gallons of gasoline. The soil is all sand: but the fragments of the original forest left untouched between the buildings, with their carpets of reindeer moss and wild flowers, are pretty; and there is a gay and promising experiment in chemical sand-gardening.

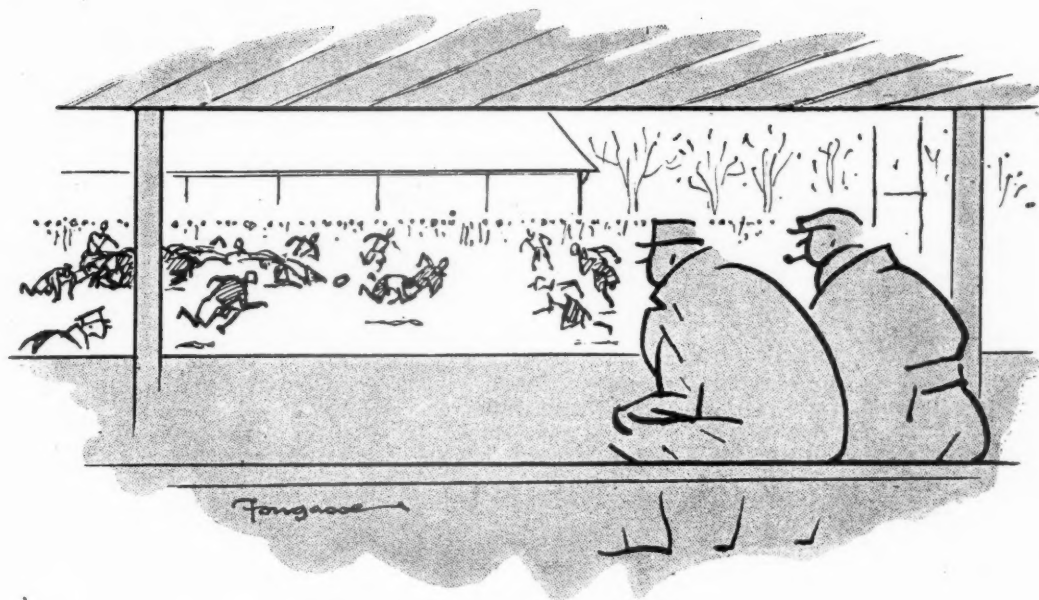
All this heavy and elaborate apparatus of living has been brought from Canada, by air or sea, and set up in a jungle two years from the day the first bull-dozer assailed the first tree.

Our dear Treasury would faint if they saw the place. Recovering, they might inquire if Goose will be worth so much expense in times of peace, about which, I suppose, no one can tell at present, though many knowing air folk say "No." Fort Pepperill, the large American base outside St. John is built with equal open-handedness; and so, I believe, are all the island airports off the American continent. Our poor Dominions Office may well inquire how they are to teach the virtues of economy and the philosophy of "go slow" to the simple Newfoundlanders if these younger countries will fling their money about in this way. The contrast, to a Newfoundlander whose government seems to be able to spend so little money on him and cannot give him the local road, the post office and the hospital he needs, must be glaring. He could not be blamed, and we should not be surprised, if he began to shift his affections to the westward.

But to-day I will not have these chill and churlish thoughts. I see only a great wonder of will-power and organization in the wilderness; the work of one of our own young nations. And if it gives us a provoking example of how to do things in style perhaps it is well.

At all events we were most hospitably and kindly used by the young and lively tribe of Goose, who were sad indeed when the Prime Minister flew past.

After supper (superb trout) I was taken tree-jeeping (my own name for this new sport). I had never been in a "jeep" before. The young officer driving was saying how varied were their uses—"as good as a tank. You



"Not at all bad really, considering it's wartime, and they must be badly out of training."

should see them deal with a tree." Idly, making conversation, rather, I mentioned that an elephant once pulled up a large tree for me in Ceylon. Suddenly, without warning, without slackening speed, the car shot off the road and rushed straight at a tall young tree, flattened and went over it. I do remember one of the officers crying "Mind your glasses, Mr. Haddock," but by that time we were bound for the second tree. Down went that. We darted to starboard and felled a third. To port again, and straight at a much, much taller and tougher tree. This went over also, but we did not. We got out axes and jacks and planks and spent twenty minutes unravelling the jeep. At the end it was really none the worse. The queerest after-dinner entertainment I know. The trees were real tough spruces; but in the sandy soil their roots have little hold. I do not recommend the sport in England. And I still prefer the elephant.

A. P. H.

"At the conference the identity of Gen. Tito, the mysterious Commander-in-Chief of the Jugo-Slav National Army of Liberation, was disclosed. He is Gen. Josip Broz Tito."—*Daily paper.*

You could knock us down with a feather.

### Basic English in the "Bricklayers' Arms"

"WOTCHERALE. Ain seenyer lately."

"Cher Bert. Ibin knockin abaht. Wotchoo bin doin?"

"Ow, saymas yoozhul. Missiz binkweer."

"Azzshe? Shawrite nah?"

"Yerzz. Jesta coljerno. Fort Igottit yesdy. Felt lahzy."

"Dohnlook uptamuch nah. Wotchavvin?"

"Fanks. Lavva brahnaale. . . Fag?"

"Taw. . . I binna pannamine sartnoon. Givda kidza treat."

"Good wozit? Wot wunja gotersee?"

"Jackna Beanstawk. Bituv awrite too itwoz. Blinkin larf! Swunnaful woddeykun do in wawtime, ainit?"

"Tiznawl. Laffta seefykun take mykidz foritzova."

"Srite. Ykun gitta good seat frarfadolla."

"Wherezat? Dahnstairz?"

"Mm. Wesat rite namiddul."

"Didja? Sno good fruss. Missiz dohnylkit inna pit. Lafftasee fweekun git upna circle. . . Drinkup."

"Rite. . . Dessay ykun gitta seatna circle bahta saymprice. Skweer, my-missizdohnlyk sitnupstairz."

"Nawme! Bchoono owitiz. Gotta go whereyer told, fersaka peasunkwytniss."

"Yorite! . . . Owza gawden?"

"Ow, notoobadjano. Carn domuch nahde evninz iz drorinin."

"Yorite! Ain binnalong tmy lot-munt frer fawtnite."

"Aimucha candoo enniway. Blinkin muddevriwhere."

"Mm. Laffta wait tilda spring faw wekun git crackinagain."

"Mm. Gointa trysum Merjestikz nexyear. Dinfink mucha dem King Edwudz Igot offuv ole Arris, didjoo?"

"Nomuch. . . Arwell. Lafftabee gitnome nah."

"Okeydoke. Seeyer Saddy, prapz?"

"Yus. Be innabaht arfseven. Taddah Bert."

"Gny talf."

"To-morrow the Ministry of Works begin construction of eight or nine demonstration houses, to be completed in three or four months. They will show new ideas in constructions and materials, including putting the roof on first."—*Daily paper.*

And gradually pushing it up with the walls.





"The irony of it. Just finished making an aircraft with a speed of 390 miles an hour, and now I've to wait 'arf an hour for a ruddy bus."

### Cries of Cambridge

"Visions of a revolution in the food habits of the nation . . . for the last three years almost all the work at . . . Torry, Ditton and Cambridge has been devoted to dehydration. . . Cabbage, storage time two years."—Daily Telegraph.]

"GIVE us of your copper,  
Give us of your gold,  
Buy our Cambridge cabbage  
(Dehydrated cabbage),  
Cabbage two years old!"  
So the men of science  
To the housewife cry,  
"Quit the local market  
(Stupid local market!),  
Come to us and buy!"

Housewife, does your household spurn its cabbage with a frown?

Say it comes from Timbuctoo and they will wolf it down.  
Cabbage from Alaska, cabbage from Turin,  
Cabbage from Siberia, cabbage from Pekin,  
Cabbage from Coolgardie, cabbage from Jodhpore—  
But never from the little man who grows it round the door.

"Give us of your copper,  
Give us of your gold,  
Buy our Cambridge cabbage  
(Dehydrated cabbage),  
Cabbage two years old!"

So the men of Cambridge  
And of Ditton cry,  
With the men of Torry  
(Where on earth is Torry?),  
"Come to us and buy!"

Science still will have its say and middlemen their grab,  
Take the British cabbage and consign it to the lab,  
On a lorry into Torry (where is Torry?) green and gay,  
Where you desiccate its noble leaves and squeeze its heart  
to hay  
And pack it up in cellophane and label it complete  
(Say at Ditton), and the Briton gets the residue to eat.

"Give us of your copper,  
Give us of your gold,  
Buy our Cambridge cabbage  
(Dehydrated cabbage),  
Cabbage two years old.  
Meat is better mummied,  
Milk is nicer dry,  
But the pick is cabbage  
(Dehydrated cabbage)  
Come to us and buy!"

H. P. E.

### Table-Talk of Amos Intolerable

IT is some years now—it was, indeed, some years then—since I first met Amos Intolerable, but I have only just begun to write down my recollections of his Table-Talk, in the belief that they may entertain and instruct the discerning few and deter others of his acquaintance from trying to cash in on their own.

The table at which most of this talk was delivered was a small round one still to be seen in the private bar of one of the smallest public-houses in the City. The tops of the legs of this table are embellished with caryatides in the form of heads of cricketers, each wearing a lowering expression and a small round cap. The reader should visualize Amos Intolerable seated at this table, almost hidden from view behind the crowd at the bar, keeping the fire off everybody else and conversing with that brilliance of which I am all too unable to give an adequate idea.

Of the passages I give, some, of course, are more disjointed than others; the reader will readily detect which. I have preferred to write a brief "frame" or introduction for each, to indicate the manner in which it was spoken, rather than adopt the method of the amanuenses of Selden or Coleridge and date the entries as if they were in a diary, or give them headings.

\* \* \* \* \*

"When Greek meets Greek," Amos once said, "he understands it perfectly."

He said this after a long argument had resulted in the conclusion that the correct quotation was, after all, "When Greek joined Greek." It was and is typical of the man that he did not allow this to influence him in the slightest. I may mention in passing that I believe one of his friends is writing his biography under the title of *Intolerable by Name, And*.

\* \* \* \* \*

A member of the company (that little fellow with the ears, I forget his name) having been troubled by anonymous



"But there now, why am I showing you? You probably know how to use these things better than I do."

correspondence, Amos said "I have come to the conclusion that the best and most satisfying method of getting back on abusive correspondents, anonymous or not, is this. For example, an anonymous letter. There's always something distinctive about it that, when mentioned, would identify it to the sender, even if he hasn't used a pseudonym: it's written in green ink, the post-mark is Rye, the writer has said he was born in 1868, or what not. Well, in your next published writing, or even in conversation if you think the writer is one of your circle, you mention all these distinctive circumstances and then maintain that the letter was laudatory and that he approves of all the things he really wrote to abuse you for. You can drive 'em crazy like that."

Of a certain restaurant he said "Oh, the things you get there are never hot; it's just because the place is so cold that they steam."

"Sam," he said to me once, mistaking me for a man named George he always used (wrongly) to call Sam—"Sam, there is a case for a dictionary of punctuation-marks. Look at that heading." He indicated a periodical open in the hands of a man at the bar; at the top of one page was the phrase FEDERATION OR DISASTER? "That means," he declared, "will there be federation or, alternatively, will there be disaster, and it even leaves the question so open as to imply that there may be something neither one nor the other. But FEDERATION OR DISASTER, without any question-mark, means we must have federation or there will be disaster. Now how can you go round writing dictionaries that give long explanations of words like the and and and it,

and yet ignore the important and radically influential question-mark, together with symbols of the same or an adjoining kidney?"

It was a severe blow to Amos when his favourite barmaid was called up, and replaced by one whom it would have been painfully inaccurate to address by his usual cheery salutation "Hullo, poise and curls!"

He said that only once did he ever attempt dramatic criticism. "My article was marred, perhaps," he admitted, "by a certain clumsiness of expression; although the sentence most complained of was true in substance and in fact. Dear old X and his company at the Z theatre put on *Hamlet*, and I observed that the production was based on the play of the same name."

"The word *impact*," he used to say, "sums up my aesthetic philosophy. Here is my definition of the essential difference between drama and farce: in drama, abstractions, and in farce, things, hit the middle of the target. The exactly-calculated impact in the most effective spot—of either the abstract idea of, say, jealousy, or the custard pie."

In a discussion on the game of rugby, Amos declared that he used to play for his old school, Maydner Bashfle. "The best scrum half we ever had," he maintained, "was Prior II (usually called Bee IV). Here's to the Maydner Bashfle XV!"

R. M.



"But according to the Fire Watching (Business Premises) Order I've GOT to stay here all night."



*"Will there be any fish left by the time it's my turn? Pass it on."*

### *Ballade of a Pre-Prandial Impatience*

WE loll about the bar in twos and threes,  
Exchanging bits of scintillating "shop."  
I quote such fragrant specimens as these:  
"At last we've got old D.A.D.O.S. on the hop."  
"They say it was a most shambolic op."  
"He puffed so much he could not score an inner."  
This is one bar I did not want to prop.  
I wish the Major would go in to dinner.

My stomach lives upon its memories . . .

"Not Smythe? He looks hand-knitted! The fat fop!"  
"What scaly types they're sending overseas!"  
"Of course you knot it with the ends on top."  
"That grease-trap contest was a frightful flop."  
"A Focke-Wulf has far the biggest spinner."

"My batman's down with boils." Why can't they stop?  
I wish the Major would go in to dinner.

But no, he orders drinks, he slaps his knees.

We take our cue. "Well, name your poison, Pop."

"I'll have a drink and not a depth-charge, please."

"Don't drown it, blast you. Just a little drop."

"They did a lovely job at Perekop."

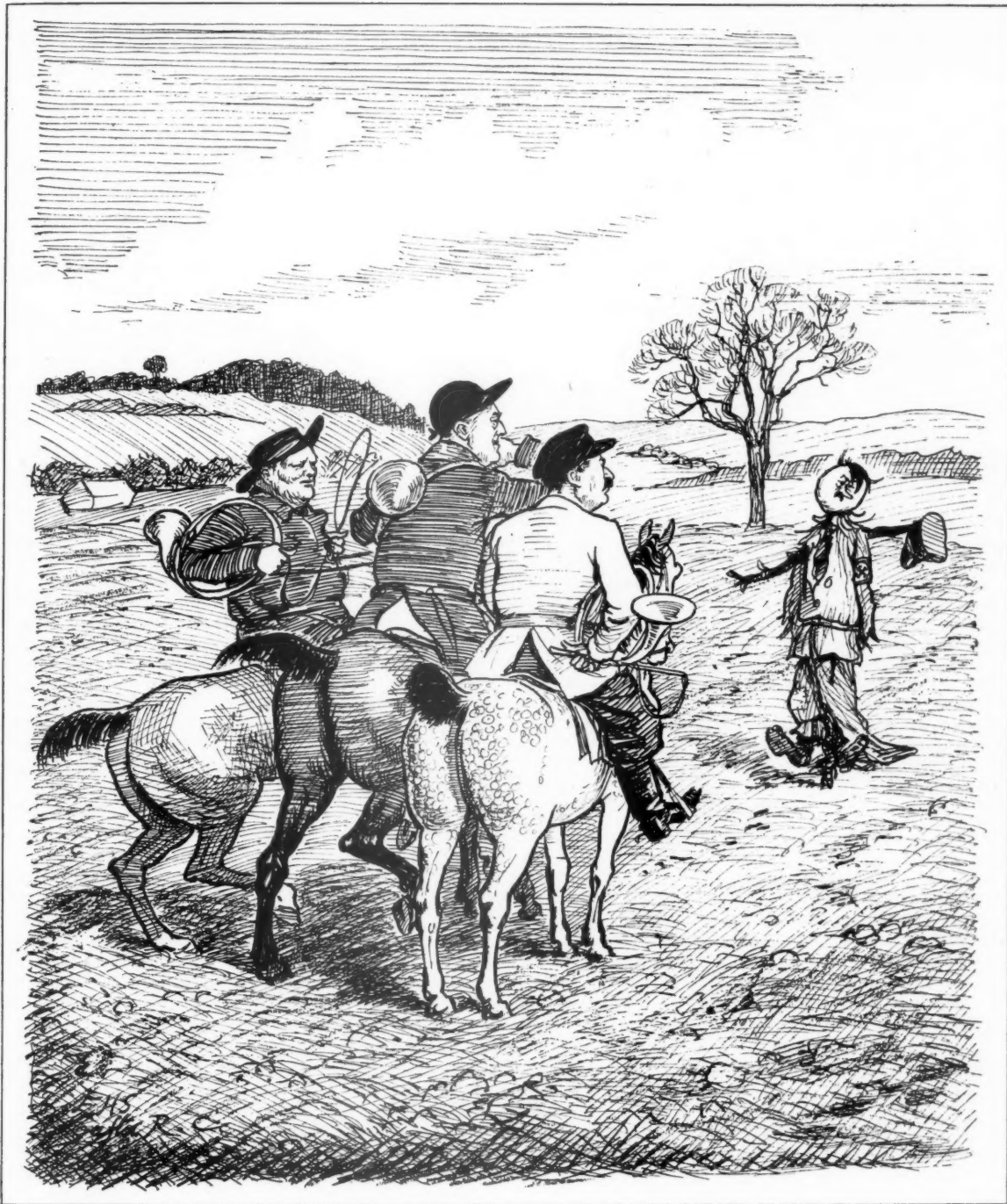
"I say: *watch Cyprus!*" I am two-thirds thinner.

My soul's eye sees a Canterbury chop.

I wish the Major would go in to dinner.

Prince, I despise the siphon-hiss, the plop  
Of ice . . . Our belts are doffed. (One sordid sinner  
Appears in battle-dress.) Be calm, my crop!  
I wish the Major would go in to dinner.





### THREE JOVIAL HUNSMEN

They hunted and they hollo'd, an' the first thing they did find  
Was a tatter't boggart in a field, an' that they kept in mind.  
One said it was a boggart, an' another he said "Nay,  
It's jist a German Fuehrer and he's almost had his day."

## Impressions of Parliament

### Business Done

**Tuesday, December 7th.**—House of Commons: Lots of Innocent Fun.

**Wednesday, December 8th.**—House of Lords: The Minister of Reconstruction Makes His Bow.

House of Commons: The Address is Passed.

**Thursday, December 9th.**—House of Commons: A War Debate is Promised.

**Tuesday, December 7th.**—The Commons were in one of their Innocent Fun moods to-day, and ready to laugh at anything—or almost anything. Just why this mood had descended it was impossible to say, but there it was, and Members were glad to have it around, if only as a change from the crabby, querulous mood of the week before, when Members had yelled themselves hoarse over the release of Sir OSWALD MOSLEY from Holloway Jail.

That issue is now dead, and even the presence in the Lobbies (as well as all along the pavements outside) of a couple of hundred shouting, banner-bearing young men and women, chanting at intervals some slogan about "Put Mosley Back in Jail—what do the workers say? Put Mosley Back in Jail—what do the Army say?" could not revive it.

Meanwhile, within, Members and Ministers were having their bit of fun. Mr. HUGH DALTON, the President of the Board of Trade (who has clearly forgotten the somewhat equivocal place leather had in the boyhoods of most), mentioned that he planned to transfer from the adult foot to that of the child most of the available shoe-leather. He would also keep a wary eye open for those who tried to make undue profit from the needs of children.

This was all very solemn. But suddenly Mr. HENDERSON STEWART asked a question about the housing position in Freuchie, which is in Fife. It was addressed (for some reason which, as the lawyers say, did not emerge) to Sir JAMES GRIGG, the Secretary of State for War.

Now Sir JAMES is an honest man. He read the answer to the question, and when he came to "Freuchie" he stopped and frankly admitted that he did not know how to pronounce it.

He essayed "Frischy." Mr. STEWART, who is a Scot and knows all these things, frowned. "Froochy, then—" Sir JAMES ventured tentatively.

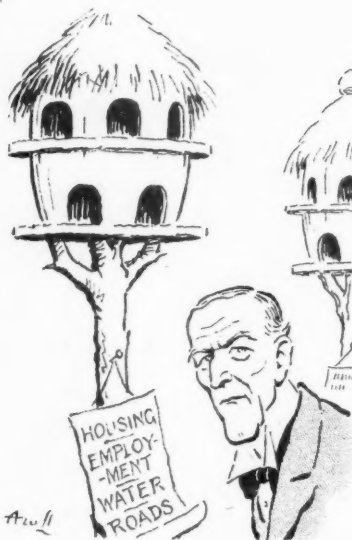
Mr. DAVID KIRKWOOD, that Scot of Scots, sitting opposite, folded his arms and "lent his eye a terrible aspect."

Sir JAMES faltered. His hand shook, his shoulders shuddered, but whether with fear or with inner laughter none could tell—although all who know the toughness and the sense of humour of the War Minister might have hazarded a good guess.

However, he looked across inquiringly at Mr. KIRKWOOD.

"Fittittittittittitrookie!" pronounced that oracle.

Sir JAMES did the best a Sassenach could do, and tried it over a time or two under "Davie's" tuition. Then Mr. STEWART, invited by the House to give his version, spoiled it all by ruling,



THE MINISTER OF PIGEON-HOLES

"It is true that I have got a lot of pigeon-holes, but they are full of pigeons, and I want Lord Woolton to call out what pigeons he wants."—Sir William Jowitt.

with all the prestige of the "local," that it was "Frooky"—about the only possible pronunciation nobody had tried.

Sir HERBERT WILLIAMS, to whom Statutory Rules and Orders are what red rags are to bulls, rubbed his hands with eager anticipation when Mr. CLEMENT ATTLEE admitted that some hundreds of those evil things had been passed and put into effect without even being printed or placed before Parliament. "And how, pray, did that happen?" Sir HERBERT (almost) asked. Mr. ATTLEE rustled his papers.

"They were very small ones," he pleaded. "Some of them related to the alteration of a one-way street and that sort of thing."

And even Sir HERBERT found it difficult to summon up a convincing "Tally-ho!" for such a quarry.

Sir JOHN ANDERSON, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, told Mr. WILLIAM BROWN that he took full personal responsibility for the action of the Head of the Civil Service in telling Civil Servants, in a circular, that they were not free to help Sir WILLIAM BEVERIDGE in framing an unofficial policy on unemployment. This, said he, was merely a reaffirmation of a rule that applied always, all the time, anyway.

Mr. BROWN, sighing for the glamour of another "scandal" but finding the House curiously unresponsive, said this was a reflection on the ability of the Civil Service, unaided, to observe the ordinary standards of its profession, and gave notice that he would raise a debate on the whole thing later.

Sir JOHN trotted out that never-failing ace of the Parliamentary pack: "I felt it my duty to present it first to this House," and although it was doubtful whether he even followed suit in so doing, he took the trick, and the order to the Civil Service will not be revoked.

Then Mr. ALFRED BARNES, in the absence, sick, of popular Mr. ARTHUR GREENWOOD, moved the official Labour Party amendment to the Address, announcing with disarming frankness in his first sentences that he did not intend to press it to a division. It was a plea for more speed in the modelling of the post-war world—a plea, in fact, that it should be modelled right now, without waiting for the post-war.

The debate was not exciting, even when Lord HINCHINGBROOKE (feeling his position of more freedom and less responsibility, having just resigned from the Home Guard) advocated bigger and better Conservative revolts against the Government. But, right at the end, Sir WILLIAM JOWITT, the Minister Without Portfolio, with the air of a man who has suffered as much as mortal frame can be expected to, got up and made an astonishingly frank speech about his chief, Lord WOOLTON, the new Minister of Reconstruction.

"Yes," said Sir WILLIAM, in effect, "he may be Minister of Reconstruction, but there ain't goin' to be no Ministry. You have called me the 'Minister of Pigeon-Holes,' but at least I have some pigeons in the holes, and Lord Woolton will bring them—my pigeons, mind you—out one at a time and make them do their stuff. So there!"

Members peered this way and that



*"We lost half a Pyramid last month through unofficial strikes."*

to see the conjuring trick Lord WOOLTON was to perform, but as they could not look forward into to-morrow they were disappointed.

Sir WILLIAM said that the time had come for decisions on post-war policy. So he had made a decision—in close consultation with the other Ministers concerned. It was that there should soon be as rich and luscious a crop of—White Papers—as e'er the world had seen. The House smiled a kind of sickly smile.

*Wednesday, December 8th.*—Mr. GEORGE HICKS, despite a rather more than ample girth, is a man in a hurry. So much so, indeed, that, having answered some questions to-day, he forthwith gathered up his papers and fled. But it was not to be. Mr. VAL McENTEE, his Parliamentary Private Secretary—appropriately arrayed in khaki battle-dress—brought him to earth (figuratively and almost literally) with as neat a piece of Unarmed Combat as we have witnessed.

Mr. HICKS, dazed but ready, turned over his papers and announced: "No. 44, Sir—" as though nothing—or next to nothing—had happened. Mr. McENTEE dusted his hands as if to say: "Let that be a lesson to you!"

Mr. MABANE, of the Ministry of Food, was asked about rats and mice. But

he disclaimed the rôle of Pied Piper, and said that, while it was his job to provide the food, it was the job of the local authorities to see that it nourished humans and not rodents. Members looked disappointed, for they would have liked to see Mr. MABANE charming the rats and mice in the same way as he does Members of the House—not, of course, that there is any connection.

Mr. JAMES MAXTON made the best joke of the Parliament—and this time it really was wit, and not mere House of Commons humour.

He was speaking of the past achievements (or otherwise) of Conservative Ministers, when Mr. HUGH MOLSON butted in with a query as to whether he recalled a certain Minister of Labour who said he could not produce rabbits out of a hat. This reference to Mr. TOM SHAW, who had made that confession long ago, made the House smile.

But quicker than a Montgomery Blitzkreig Mr. MAXTON retorted: "We have gone far since then. Now we have a Minister of Labour who can produce miners out of a hat!"

This topical one about Mr. BEVIN's scheme to select men for the pits by drawing their numbers from a hat brought the House down.

Lord WOOLTON, the Minister of Reconstruction, promised the Lords that he would do his best in his new job, and that if he did not get the powers he wanted and needed would resign.

Noble Lords, feeling that he could not make a fairer offer than that, cheered. They cheered again when Admiral of the Fleet Lord CORK and ORRERY, aided by Lord KEYES (also A. of F.), defeated the Government on a motion about better allowances for the dependents of fallen officers.

A bloodless sort of victory it was. When the division was called one small voice piped up for the Government, scores against.

*Thursday, December 9th.*—Mr. ATTLEE promised a war debate in the next series of sittings. By then one or other of the several Ministers who alternate in the part of Prince of Denmark will be available. Mr. ATTLEE looked as relieved as did the rest of the House at the prospect of a fuller cast for the next production of the Parliamentary Hamlet.

"What are we engineers, mice or men?"  
Letter to—"Commercial Motor."

Well, some of us are M.I.C.E.





"Hey, mind where you throw your cigarette-ends!"

## Elephantasma

"**B**EING on a common like this I dare say you have rights of turbary," said James. He was lying on his stomach in front of a large fire, going through the deeds of my house.

"Of what?" I asked.

"Of helping yourself to turf. The least inflammable substance known to man, not excepting asbestos. One of the more maddening things about the Irish is the way they make it burn."

"If you were any use as a solicitor," I told him, "you'd be able to tell at a glance what I can do and what I can't. What do I pay you for?"

"You don't, you ask me for the week-end instead," said James, but without rancour. "The trouble is there's something missing here. This deed of 1688, your earliest one, simply says: 'together with such rights of commonage as may be appendant or

appurtenant thereto.' That may mean anything. Common of piscary in the pond, for instance."

"That would give me a part-share in the tench-syndicate?"

"You could probably tether a sealion on the verge."

"Of starvation, I'm afraid. Have some more beer."

"What it all boils down to is immemorial custom. I had a cottage in Hampstead once which carried the right to hang out washing on the Heath. My pyjamas were a scandal and affront to all decent-minded folk, but they couldn't touch me. Either people have been doing something so long that the Lord of the Manor daren't say No, or they haven't, in which case you can only try it on and pretend they have. With the help of a good solicitor, of course."

"Do you mean I could graze an

elephant on the common if I felt so inclined?"

"I can't see anything to stop you, except the elephant."

"How many ordinary cows could I put out?"

"Levant and couchant upon the land, as we say in the trade? It used to be the number you needed for your plough. Why not ask your fellow sokemen?"

"Because they all want to sell us milk."

"I should let them. Cows are revolting creatures in the home."

"But it does seem a pity in these days to have feudal rights and not exercise them."

"All right, then keep your elephant."

"I don't believe sokemen ever had elephants."

"That's what would be so nice. You'd take advantage of a custom to

do something which had never been done before."

"Well, quite seriously, why don't private people keep elephants?"

"I think because elephants only do about two miles to the hay-stack. But here on the common there's fodder galore. And litter."

"Of course the barn might have been made for an elephant. And the stable-yard. Have some more beer."

"A quiet reliable beast about to be pensioned off from a circus, with its keeper. Quite inexpensive. The keeper to be also your gardener."

"Well, there's a lot of heavy work to be done before we knock this place into shape. Trees to fell, ditches to clear, paths to lay."

"Child's-play to an elephant. And another thing. You've always lived too quietly for a writer."

"How do you mean? I'm not good at noises on."

"If you were to inject a little theatre into your life you'd treble your income. Just think if you rolled into Guildford once a week in a well-polished howdah and drank a small gin while it waited outside."

"It would be lovely to be famous. Have some more beer."

"Thanks. And of course you could pick an elephant with some really dramatic trick, like playing the Japanese anthem on a mouth-organ. It's a magnificent idea."

"We mustn't jump at it too recklessly, James. After all, I'm a family man."

"An elephant's just what children need. It gives them a sense of proportion."

"There must be some objection, if we could only think of it."

"You'd have a coupé howdah, in this climate. That goes without saying."

"James, as my man of law it's your job to pull me up."

"I'm blown if I do. Ring the Lord of the Manor immediately."

I got through to Mrs. Harrington-Osgood without difficulty.

"I have a rather peculiar request to make," I told her.

"Then I suppose you're something to do with the Home Guard," she said kindly in her silvery old voice.

"I wondered what you would think of my pasturing an elephant on the manorial waste as soon as the war is over?"

"An elephant? Well, I believe the

sporting rights are still mine, but I sold my husband's elephant-gun years ago. The animal would be quite safe."

"But you wouldn't mind it?"

"Why should I? I hope it'll frighten all those damned cows away. Too many of 'em. What are its habits?"

"It's going to play the Argentine anthem on an oboe and pick its keeper up by his toes. His name will be McMurtrie and he will have a small moustache. Together they will take my children to school each morning."

"Splendid!" said Mrs. Harrington-Osgood. "I am with you all the way. But just for form's sake I had better speak to my solicitor. Good-bye."

"She is with us all the way. She is obtaining her tort-hound's concurrence."

James's eyes had lit up curiously.

"You don't say she also is one of your victims?" I asked.

"And unlike some of them, she pays for my advice."

"Which will be?"

"Entirely dependent on my finding another bottle of your beer."

And he went in search of it.

ERIC.



"I shouldn't be telling you this over the phone, but it looks as if we're to have an old-fashioned W-H-I-T-E C-H-R-I-S-T-M-A-S."

## To Our Future Employer

**A**H, look me over, here I come,  
through misty month or year,  
no ailing lad, no schoolboy dumb,  
to seek your doubtful ear,  
who picked silk stockings up for Mum  
at twelve Italian lire.

Above your sleeping home at night  
I've flown to flare and shell,  
'twas I that took the bombing sight  
that blew the Hun to hell,  
yet dreamed of jobs more snug and tight  
when I could sleep as well.

And since I've tossed the ocean blue  
and sought the stars for track,  
and sailed to fight the convoys through  
and brought them safely back—  
I'll tell you tales of derring-do  
on days when trade is slack.

Oh, be your business straight and fair  
as comrades in the line,  
for common good you'll do your share,  
I'll serve you well for mine:  
o'er seas and the still savage air  
shake, friend, we'll suit us fine.

## Toller Reports

To O.C. B Sqn.

**A**S requested I submit herewith a detailed report on my actions during the recent pre-invasion exercise Spearhead when I was Empire Liaison Officer on a motor-cycle now the subject of a separate court of inquiry.

The exact circumstances surrounding damage to this machine are as follows. In my capacity as L.O. it was necessary to ride continually along narrow routes often blocked by tanks, and in this way I had frequently to stop my engine to conserve petrol according to principles laid down on the unit Motor-Cycle Course. Unfortunately the m/c became more and more difficult to restart. The slipping of my foot from the kick-start repeatedly bruised my shin on the foot-rest and I finally raised the clutch in mistake for the exhaust-lift during a particularly violent kick, wrenching a muscle in my calf as the weight of my body came down on no resistance, the machine and myself further overbalancing and spilling a quantity of petrol. In addition it was raining, bitterly cold,

night was coming on, I was without rations and not completely sure of my position, as the country was bleak and without landmarks. However, I decided to push the motor-cycle to a slight incline and attempt to start down the slope as my right leg was too weak for further kicking. Flooding the carburettor, I accordingly commenced to coast down the incline until sufficient way was obtained to let in the clutch. Upon this, the engine back-fired and caught alight, running the

*BE stirring as the time ; be fire  
with fire ;  
Threaten the threatener, and outface  
the brow*

*Of bragging horror : so shall  
inferior eyes,  
That borrow their behaviours from  
the great,  
Grow great by your example, and  
put on  
The dauntless spirit of resolution....*

SHAKESPEARE (King John).

That clarion call still rings in our ears to-day, for once more Britons are going forth to the assault against the German enemy as they have against foreign enemies in the past. And if we cannot all man the tanks and guns, pilot the planes and sail the ships, we can all take part in this mighty effort. To those who must stay behind we say

### PLEASE

send a donation to Mr. PUNCH'S COMFORTS FUND, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

machine into a ditch. By this time it was past the hour for black-out and, as the flames were conspicuous, leaping four feet high, I doubled down the lane in an effort to find a pond to procure water in my crash-helmet. In the direction chosen no pond proved available, so I doubled back to find two private soldiers warming themselves by the motor-cycle and in fact stoking it with wood. I sent them immediately to procure water in the opposite direction after ascertaining their names and placing them on a charge. Since these privates failed to return (their names subsequently proving fictitious) and the fire eventually died down, I decided to seek cover for the night as the rain had now turned to sleet and there were no further means of keeping warm. Before leaving the m/c I attempted to remove the tools with the idea of secreting

them in the hedge for safety but, with the light of the flames failing, it was hard to distinguish the bicycle, with the result that I suffered burns on the fingers and on the right knee, and was finally unable to open the toolbox. This inability to remove the tools at the time explains their subsequent disappearance when I was compelled to leave the machine unattended. A further point mentioned has been the breaking of a number of spokes in the front wheel and I regret this was due to my kicking the bicycle in a fit of annoyance as it lay in the ditch.

No cover proved available in the immediate vicinity, but I eventually found a broken-down tank in a lane, in charge of a Tpr who kindly allowed me to climb into the turret, shutting down the turret-cover and himself remaining outside. After a short sleep I awoke and hit my head on a sharp object inside the tank in an effort to change my position. It further occurred to me that information should be given as to the whereabouts of myself and the bicycle, but as it was pitch-dark inside the tank and I was not conversant with the internal layout of the vehicle, I was unable, after grazing my right elbow and tearing my left battledress trouser-leg on sharp objects, to find the correct wireless switches. I therefore called to the Tpr in charge of the tank to let me out, but could get no answer, the Tpr in question, it being later discovered, having gone to sleep in a shed. The turret-cover was immovable so I was compelled to remain where I was. The further cause of my unsoldierly appearance when finally released from the tank as described below was that, finding a tin during groping inside the tank for food, I hit this against a sharp object to open it without being aware in the dark that the tin contained soup. The injury to my right thumb was also caused in this way.

When my shouts were at length answered at approximately 0700 hrs, and the turret-cover raised, I looked from the tank to understand the unfortunate position referred to in your note. The two carriers and the staff car bogged in the ditch behind the tank may have got in this position owing to the tank blocking the lane, but I would emphasize that no actual collision occurred with the tank or this would have been apparent to myself inside. Neither was the Bde transport held up behind in the lane in any way my responsibility, as I had merely been sheltering in the tank, but this could not be made clear to the Brigadier, who ordered me to move the tank immediately or inform him what was



wrong with it. I was able to comply with neither of these orders and as a consequence a report on my conduct has, I understand, been made by the Brigadier in question. With regard to this matter I would point out that the insinuation that I bobbed down into the tank after first looking out, in an effort to evade responsibility, is untrue, since I had in fact wedged my boot in the traversing gear. This explains also my slowness in descending from the tank in response to orders by the Brigadier and the fact that I was eventually compelled to descend wearing only one boot.

The reason requested for the non-delivery of Umpires' Reports in my possession at the time was that these had been carried in a map-case tied to the handlebars of the motor-cycle referred to above.

(Signed) J. TOLLER, Lt.

Home Forces.

### At the Play

#### "HALF-WAY TO HEAVEN" (PRINCES)

SOME of us must find the new farce at the Princes "nowhere to go for a laugh," as the American is reputed to have said of Matthew Arnold. Is the hint of the possibility of a hitch in the disposal of one's spirit after death funny? Can the plight of a little boxer who is not dead but has lost his body because it has been cremated be funny? Is the series of resorts and devices by which he gradually returns to a boxing body sufficiently like his own to live for another fifty years—are these frivolous incarnations funny? The sustained giggles of the typical war-time audience around us forbade us to interpret the involved idea of this farce as fundamentally unfunny. Yet there we sat, agelastic amid laughter, and able to smile only when Mr. SYDNEY HOWARD came on to the stage as the boxer's unspiritual-minded manager and consented to shake hands with non-existent personages with that undulating gesture of his that resembles nothing so much as the onslaught of a conger-eel upon a starfish.

Mr. HARRY SEGALL's farce (though the Princes programme gives no indication of the fact) is identical with the film called *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* in which Mr. ROBERT MONTGOMERY was seen last year. Mr. MONTGOMERY was whimsically amusing as the boxer in spite of the film seeming to us, as does the play, resolutely uncomical. Similarly Mr. BOBBY HOWES—working far harder than BOB



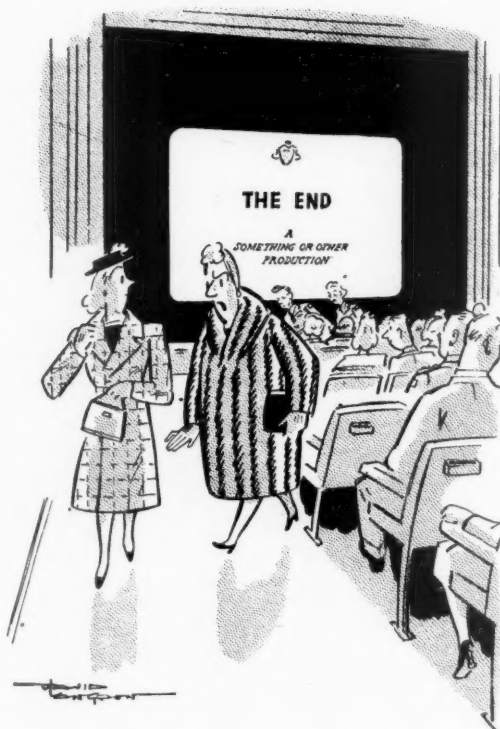
"I'm goin' back—I've fergot me teeth!"

"Blimey! They're droppin' BOMBS, not SANDWICHES!"

MONTGOMERY seemed to work—endows the character with a kind of desperate whimsicality. But perhaps it needs an indisputably great comedian? Perhaps a Hawtrey could have made us relax at *Half-way to Heaven* and agree to accept its theme as a farcically funny one by the sheer force of his comic dismay? Or perhaps, going back a little further, J. L. Toole would have worked the miracle? One of the major Manchester critics was moved to write of that extraordinary comedian in some forgotten farce of the late eighties: "No actor, in our opinion, is his equal in expressing comic distress, comic terror, and the utter abandonment of comic despair. Almost all other actors either make these things wild and falsely extravagant, or else, in a mistaken endeavour towards realism, make their distress and despair tragic rather than comic. Mr. Toole has that art which Colley

Cibber praises in a great comedian of his day, which Charles Lamb complained had passed away with the old actors—the art of being thoroughly earnest and real in his grief and distress, and yet by some magnetic hint or gesture keeping the audience aware that it is all his fun—that he too, in spite of his forlorn situation, is enjoying the humour of the comedy he is creating."

Those readers who can successfully apply that yardstick of criticism to Mr. BOBBY HOWES—it contains all the qualities which the present part seems to call for—will find his performance in *Half-way to Heaven* quite irresistible. It is fair to say that plenty of people will and do. Mr. HOWARD is, as aforesaid, funny in himself, and there are some young ladies—they are, it is true, feebly served by their author—who vary between the languid, the near-languid, and the wan. A. D.



"I'm sorry I've seen it now—it'll spoil the book for me."

### Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

#### Carlyle

CARLYLE'S enthusiasm for Prussia, and enormous and consistently eulogistic history of Frederick the Great, cost him most of his reputation when the last war broke out, and what was left has been dissipated by the career of Frederick's other great admirer, Hitler. To replace Carlyle on his Victorian pedestal is beyond any man's capacity, but tact and insight could retrieve enough from the wreck to construct a Carlyle who, if less impressive than the Victorian effigy, would be far more real, and therefore much better worth knowing. In *Carlyle—Prophet of To-Day* (ROUTLEDGE, 8/6), Mr. F. A. LEA has, he tells us, deliberately concentrated attention on the works which Carlyle himself regarded as containing all that was essential to his message. It has not, however, occurred to him that a message which at the beginning of his career Carlyle illustrated from Goethe, Burns and Johnson, a little later from Mirabeau, then from Cromwell, and finally from Frederick the Great, is heterogeneous enough to require interpretation, not a mild ripple of assent. The poet in Carlyle was not strong enough to contend against the dour peasant who in the guise of a major prophet installed himself as the chief figure in the most fashionable literary salon of the age. When he wrote *The French Revolution* he was still in

sympathy, though it was dwindling, with the enemies of privilege. When he wrote on Cromwell his position in the world of literature was roughly analogous to that of the homespun country squire whose submission to the purposes of God had placed him on the throne of England. When he wrote on Frederick he needed that model of callousness to steel him against the misery his slavish submission to Lady Ashburton was causing Mrs. Carlyle. Mr. LEA disclaims any interest in Mrs. Carlyle, but the few words in which she speaks of Bath House, Lady Ashburton's home, throw more light on the secret of Frederick's attraction for Carlyle than all the pages Mr. LEA gives to justifying Carlyle's adulation—"When I first noticed the heavy yellow house without knowing, or caring to know, whom it belonged to, how far I was from dreaming that through years and years I should carry every stone's weight of it on my heart." It is in Carlyle's Letters, Journals and "other fugitive and posthumous publications," as Mr. LEA calls them, that his flashes of poetry and tenderness, and crabbed but fascinating humour, are to be found, and from these sources a portrait of a true though contorted genius will one day be drawn. H. K.

#### Second-Class to Bryndyfi

A watering-place with a desert of impoverished rural life behind it is a disquieting spectacle, like a gross but unpromising graft on a stock that has known better days. As a study of such a world *There Was No Yesterday* (EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, 9/-) might have been extremely interesting; but this is not Mr. JOHN STUART AREY's main purpose. He has set out to relate the love-affairs of a cross-section of middle-class youth and the course of an outbreak of paratyphoid. The scene is a Welsh "resort." The link between the themes is a hospital run by a heroic local G.P. and a young doctor home on leave. Bryndyfi is depicted as moribund, apart from its *rentiers* and tourism. Only a cream-bun factory, established by the "alien" and cynical *Colonel Seton*, employs such local youth as has lost its hereditary taste for land and sea. Among the cream-bun makers is the daughter of a nefarious midwife, an abortionist who is also a "carrier." As a commentary on the mishandling of contemporary youth—rich and poor alike—the book is incisive but uninspiring. Its professional vein is less stylized than its romance; and its physical clues provide, as a rule, better hunting than their psychological counterparts. H. P. E.

#### For our Horatios

A desire to serve his generation is so obviously behind the writing of Air Chief Marshal Lord DOWDING's book on Spiritualism, *Many Mansions* (RIDER, 6/-), that it is impossible to take it other than seriously, though he might have made more converts had he been more concerned with proving the authenticity of the messages, purporting to be from discarnate spirits, than with the messages themselves. As long as there is the least doubt as to their source they can have no more value than fiction, and the fact that messages confirm each other proves nothing if they come through the same medium. There is much in the extracts from the messages Lord DOWDING gives that is beautiful, much that many who are not spiritualists believe already, but there is also much that is vague or contradictory, and an attitude towards the Christian faith which combines approval with flat denial of much of its creed. It is confusing, too, when the same illiterate soldier is reported as saying "Wot does we do now?" and "The repercussion was felt by us all;" and the same child uses

"wot" for what and "becos" for because, yet manages "ectoplasm" without difficulty. Yet as a plea for the wisdom of believing that there are many more things in heaven and earth than our Horatius dream of the book has a value which is increased by its patent sincerity. B. E. S.

### Island Story

A novel about the Home Guard "the only military objective of which is laughter" is pretty certain of an irreverent allure; but not for Mr. COMPTON MACKENZIE the bucolic or urban humours of the English variant of defender. *Keep the Home Guard Turning* (CHATTO AND WINDUS, 8/6) depicts the stalwarts of Great Todday and Little Todday, two adjacent Hebridean islands which end up—congenially to local patriotism, if not conveniently for military administration—in two separate defence areas. When the story opens *Captain Paul Waggett*, retired English chartered accountant and *grand seigneur* of Great Todday, has been empowered to head the then L.D.V. of both islands. And, diverting his energies from scrounging emergency stores for his wife to the tactful enlistment of Gaels and Sassenachs, Catholics and Protestants, he puts up a very good show. It is unfortunate that the best shot on Little Todday should be a redoubted poacher of *Captain Waggett's* wild geese. It is also unfortunate that the more strait-laced local matrons have a way of looking up their sons (with a Bible and bread and cheese) until the Sabbath "work of Satan" is over. But fortune favours the brave; and a really charming love-story tempers the robust diversions of a very pleasant and timely extravaganza.

H. P. E.

### About Jane Austen

In *Talking of Jane Austen* (CASSELL, 12/6) Miss SHEILA KAYE-SMITH and Miss G. B. STERN have put on paper, for the benefit of other lovers of Jane Austen, the substance of the many talks they have enjoyed about the people in the novels, their characters, their environment, their education, meals, dress, attitude to love, marriage, money, religion and so on. Miss STERN, to whom Jane Austen's world is "the loveliest of all worlds . . . as beautiful as freedom, as reassuring as tolerance," gambols about in it with artless glee, praising this character, scolding that—"Why does Colonel Brandon talk of flannel waistcoats? Why does he complain of a slight rheumatic feel in one of his shoulders? It was perfectly easy to be silent on both subjects. Has he no idea how to recommend himself to a romantic girl of seventeen?" Miss KAYE-SMITH is more critical and more guarded, not, one conjectures, because she loves Jane Austen less but because she is more sensitive than her ardent collaborator to the unfavourable reactions likely to be provoked by an unbroken pæan of praise and thanksgiving. She speaks of Jane Austen's snobbishness and occasional primness, and she makes the interesting and plausible suggestion that the curious strain of censoriousness and puritanism in *Mansfield Park* may reflect a passing response by Jane Austen to the Evangelical Revival, which was then at its height. The almost complete absence in the novels of direct references not only to the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars but also to the current brutalities of English life is also touched upon by Miss KAYE-SMITH, who attributes it to a conscious resolve to ignore the darker side of existence. It is owing to this resolve, Miss KAYE-SMITH says, that Jane Austen's world makes such an ideal holiday resort. Nevertheless, her last novel, *Persuasion*, shows that her power to keep suffering out of her world was beginning to collapse. The final sentence suggests that the Napoleonic

wars were far more present to her mind than has been supposed—"She gloried in being a sailor's wife, but she must pay the tax of quick alarm for belonging to that profession"—and her early death and last words, that she wished for nothing but death, express a weariness of life which a freer acceptance of its pains might have dissipated.

H. K.

### West Indian Album

It is a modest traveller who brings back nothing but the impressions of others who made his voyage before him. Mr. JAMES POPE-HENNESSY is not quite so modest, but very nearly. *West Indian Summer* (BATSFORD, 12/6) is, to be frank, the strangest hotch-potch. Island runs into island, century into century, and quotation into quotation, and all, it seems, with the commendable purpose of making one of the composite and vivid pictures sometimes painted by Virginia Woolf or Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell. Frequently the attempt comes off. A picnic, a morning ambush, Coleridge's nephew and the tread-wheel, a shower of arrows at the dancing sailors, a Christmas quadrille in the slave quarters, the Duchess of Albemarle sending off parcel after parcel of chocolate to England, where they never arrived—there is enough material. His luckiest borrowings perhaps were from Sir Hans Sloane. Here, indeed, was the happiest of travellers, cupping and doctoring duke and slave, setting off at dawn to collect plants, pressing and naming and comparing, bringing back alive with him—though they died on the voyage—an alligator, an iguana, and a seven-foot snake. Without the Doctor and the superb illustrations the book would certainly be thin—an opinion the author is evidently prepared for—but we owe him too much for reminding us of his source-books to nurse any harder feeling than one of slight disappointment.

J. S.



"I was ploughed in Greek."



## Pretty Dull

WHEN Pye rang me up and claimed to have been at school with me I could not at first place him; but when I was in the train, on the way to dine with him, he began to take shape in my mind. He was, as I remembered, a pale round-faced youth with very fat knees.

At South Kensington station I recognized him at once. He looked exactly the same—except that at school, of course, he had not had a moustache with brushed-up ends (which struck me as being rather an affectation for a boy like Pye), nor did I ever remember his wearing the uniform of an Air Force officer.

"This is wizard," he said, shaking hands—"you haven't changed a bit."

"Nor have you," I said.

"Wizard," said Pye.

"Well, well," I said, changing my umbrella from one arm to the other.

It appeared that Pye had been reading one of my books. (I said, "Which one?"—but, of course, I knew which one. There is only one.) He had telephoned my publishers ("Oh, yes?"—airily) who had put him on to me.

"So you're a writer? I seem to remember old Shaky Baxter reading one of your essays to the class at school. Jolly good."

I began to like Pye.

"What have you been doing for twenty years?" I asked him. It seemed only fair to give him a chance.

"What's the world been like?"

"Pretty dull," he said. "Pretty dull, you know." He took my elbow. "I live here," he said.

It was after dinner, in the bar, that he began to talk. He would only drink lemon-and-dash, though, so he needed a lot of prompting.

"After I left school?" he said. "Oh, well, I did a bit of civil flying. Always keen on flying, you know. Used to pay a pound an hour. Then I went and fooled about in an aero-engine factory. Always mad on engines, you know. Then, of course, all that stopped."

"How do you mean, stopped?"

"Oh, disarmament creeping in, you know. Had a bad time, then. Living on penny pork-pies for a time, till I went into the asylum."

I didn't say anything.

"Two years of that. Sort of clerk. Interesting, though. D'you know what struck me most?"

"No?" I said, disguising my relief.

"All those loonies. Just like ordinary people. Made you wonder. I was glad to get into advertising."

"Advertising? What branch of advertising?"

"Oh, one of the lower branches. Selling space."

I said I thought that must have called for a high degree of salesmanship.

"It did. Space in a directory, you see. Arrive in some town, knock on a shop door. 'How about buying half a page, sir?' 'Get out!' Then I drew commission on sales, you see."

"I see."

He patted the top of his head (did I say that he was quite bald?) and laughed a little. He said:

"I used to envy you, sometimes, with your nice safe job in the bank. You did go into a bank, didn't you?"

I admitted it. But, I said, I was thinking of giving it up any moment, even though I was a key man. Writing, after all—

"Another whisky?"

"No, no. You have another of those things."

"No, no. Elsie!"

The girl came up and smiled at him. "Then things got a bit better," said Pye. "I took a partnership in a silver fox farm."

"A partnership?"

"Somebody else put up the money; I put up the knowledge. I didn't know anything about silver fox farming, of course—but who was to know that?"

"Exactly."

"Anyway, the foxes died. And after that I went about the country building radio-towers. An engineer, they called me."

"But I don't see how——?"

"Answered an advertisement, you see; then talked them into it; I insisted on a good foreman. Piece of cake. Got a sort of reputation for settling strikes. Used to climb as much of the tower as had been built and harangue the men. Got on well at that. But then, one day, I had a letter from a Spanish type."

"A Spanish——?"

"Spaniard. Went to see him. Quite a nice chap. Threw no knives. Asked me if I'd be interested in a bit of flying. Said I couldn't afford it. Offered me thirty quid a week."

"Look here—have another——"

"No, no, this is mine. Elsie!" He drained his lemon-and-dash. "Flying against Franco's bunch, you see. Promised me smashing planes. So of course I went."

"Really! Spanish Civil War, eh?"

"Well—thirty quid a week, you know. Wouldn't you have? We had a suite in a nice hotel in Barcelona. Flew when we wanted to. Wore flannels. The kites were obsolete trainers; one machine-gun firing through the prop; usually fired the prop off. Jerry flying against us in Me. 109s, even in 1936. Used to fly in little circles, hoping he'd run out of petrol before I did."

"Weren't you—er—didn't you get, well, shot down?"

"Oh, now and then, yes. Well, when it was over I was out of a job. Never saved any money. Only got back as far as Portugal."

"I see. What did you do there?"

He laughed. "Well, somebody was advertising for a headmaster for a school. So I took that on."

"In Portugal?"

"It was a school for English kids. I taught them Spanish."

"But—Spanish! I didn't know you——"

"Learnt it in Barcelona, you see. Taught them some rather awful words, I've found out since. Got married in Portugal."

"Oh. I didn't know you were married. Is she—was she——? I mean, in Portugal—your wife——?"

"Oh, no. English girl. Jolly nice girl. Airways stewardess, she was. Flying bombers about to stations over here now. Had to marry her twice—some local rule, or something."

"I see."

"Wizard girl, really."

"I'm sure she is. And then, when war broke out, you came back and——?"

"Well, actually, I was in prison when war broke out."

"In——?"

"In Madrid, you know. Went over to see some old friends and got pinched as a suspect. Had a picture of me from the time I was flying on the wrong side."

"But they released you?"

"Well, in a way. Bit of tunnelling, you know. Then I came back and joined up."

"I see."

"Seemed to be as good a job as any." "Yes. What sort of flying—or is that a secret, or anything?"

"Oh, no, no. All sorts, you know. Night-fighters at the moment. Pretty dull, really."

He put down his glass. "Look," he said—"I've been shooting a horrible



## ROYAL SIGNALS

**W**HEN Alfred went to Athelney (in days before Dunkirk)  
He needed news, immediate and exact,  
To organize his counter-blow—by patient plodding work—  
While making sure his lines were not attacked.

So Alfred lay in Athelney. His minefields were deep mires,  
While westward, where the Quantock summits soar,  
Earl Odda planned a system of communicating fires—  
A rude but royal forbear of the Corps.

Fire Beacon Hill hides ancient scars  
amid the blowing ling,  
Which mark the station war-wise  
Odda took:  
The Poldens screened his messages from  
Guthrum's watchful wing,  
But Athelney could read them like a  
book.

For Alfred based his tactics on intelli-  
gence received,  
On movements of the enemy flashed  
through.  
A harper's tale may please the schools  
where fables are believed,  
But that was how the great offensive  
grew.

An ancient theme! . . . But yesterday  
those long-forgotten fires  
Stirred suddenly amid the browning  
bloom,  
And history came full circle when The  
Signals laid their wires  
Along the shadowed heart of Hodder's  
Combe.

line, I'm afraid. Let's hear something about you for a change?"

"Well . . ." I said.

I felt it was unimportant to have been made a branch manager. The bank seemed unimportant altogether. There was no glamour about banks, nor even about bank-managers. Literature? There was a suspicion of glamour there. Even night-fighter pilots were not always able to write books.

"Well," I said again—"I've done quite a bit of writing, you know."

"I know," said Pye. "It's simply wizard." He looked at me with genuine admiration. I felt a cheat, making so much of so little. But his last remark, as he slipped off the red leather stool and stretched himself, justified me, I think.

"I've written a couple of books," he said. "Didn't sell many. Wish I'd known where you were—you might have doctored 'em up for me a little."

"I'd have been delighted," I murmured, turning away for my bowler hat.

## So You Can't Take It?

THE war has virtually rid us of the amateur photographer. I don't mean the fellow like you and me who snaps his camera at a pal or a peak that he wants to remember. I mean the enthusiast, the "advanced" amateur who makes pictures. Not that death, or even conscription, has overtaken the fraternity—these setbacks would not stay them—but that sheer scarcity of film and paper mocks their hunger and makes impotent camera-dusters and moody negative-filers of them.

In vain does Nature's Spotlight strike through glades, in vain does Jack Frost leave his tracery on kitchen-windows. Scarcely a shutter clicks. Only, in a thousand glades and kitchens, amateurs fold their thwarted arms, their baffled cameras, and watch the magic fade that they could have immortalized.

Well, it's not for me to joy in their griefs. I am moved to tears to think of their enlarging a negative on a scrap of gaslight instead of a sheet of whole-

plate, double-weight, matt-surfaced, cream-based, soft-grade bromide. And I think you will be too.

But there are compensations (for us), and it is about one of these I want to talk. Have you hiked with a camera-fiend and known what it is to lose the dignity of an individual and dwindle into a foreground object? Then you'll know what I mean.

For years I walked with an advanced amateur. I was his Figure that balanced a birch-tree or broke the line of a fence. A bit of a poser, in fact. I knew him in his backward days when I fell a victim to camera-shake or was double-exposed on to Neptune's Might. But these were easy times. He passed into the intermediate, then the advanced class, getting choosier and more temperamental all the time. Now I'd be too stiff or I sprawled. I hid the tree or it hid me, or we both moved. I had to come forward looking back, or go away and show my profile, or sit in a gorse-bush and look natural. These are not easy things and I never had the recognition I deserved.

For it wasn't me he wanted. I was pitched into a panorama to be rapt. The lakes I've looked down on! The fells I've looked up at! Back-view, of course. Now and then I got a bit of star-work. I remember being the Ploughman Homeward Plodding with my coat off half a mile away. I was the Last Visitor in a bitter deck-chair with my shoes under water and the top of my head showing. I played the Climber with a rope round my neck on a nasty bit of rock. He took that from below because he wanted Intrepid in the title. But usually I was just Human Interest in the background.

"I want you," he said once—and this instance epitomizes all I've gone through at his hands—"I want you to sit on the fence."

He waved me to a crazy bit of railing on the very edge of just such a cliff as Edgar described to Gloucester.

"Now what?"

"Look at the gulls."

"There aren't any."

"There will be when I pitch a stone down."

Psychologically it wasn't a reassuring remark.

He set up his tripod and peered into the reflex-finder. What he saw didn't please him.

"You couldn't get the other side?"

"It would be inconvenient," I replied, glancing into the abyss.

"I'll make it do. Look carefree."

I shifted furtively to a sounder piece of fence.

"Now what are you doing?" he demanded, his nose in the finder.

"Preserving Human Interest."

"It's unbalanced."

"So am I," I muttered.

He picked the camera up and jockeyed back and forth with it: then left and right: then up and down. Then he brought it back where he had it. Time passed and the wind.

"Could I come in a bit," I said, the gulf giving me spells of vertigo.

"Impossible: spoil my depth of focus."

"I was thinking of my peace of mind."

He extracted himself from his apparatus and fell into a trance.

I stuck it a fair time while the waves boomed in the awful depth and the gulls did airborne manœuvres with damnable confidence. At last I left my post and tackled him.

"Hey," I said, "remember me? I'm the chap on the fence."

"A three-hundredth at five point six, or a five-hundredth at three point five," he murmured abstractedly. "Green or yellow filter?"

I tapped him on the shoulder. He started.

"What about taking it," I said, "before death takes a sitter?"

"I can't get the picture I want."

"Have you tried pressing the trigger?"

He gestured impatiently.

"I'm settling technical matters. You would think," he cried, addressing a reconnaissance force of gulls—"you would think a fellow could sit still a minute to have his picture taken." He had another go in the finder, then another. "Dash it!" he said, "if it doesn't look better without you." And he snapped the thing. . . .

Do you wonder I rejoice at the scarcity of raw materials?

## Crime Marches On.

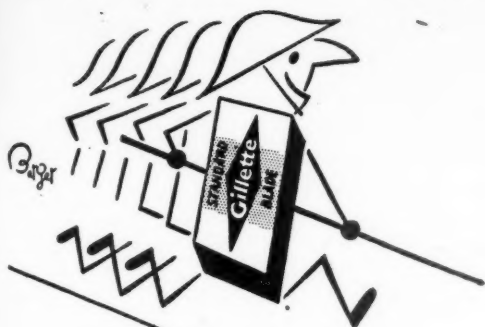
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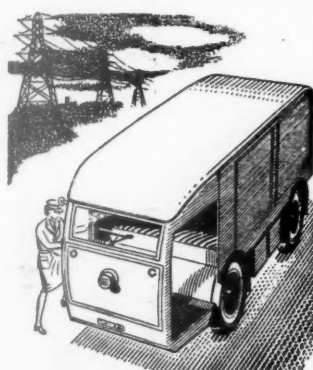
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